Suicide Revealed

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A civilian employee of the Department of the Army unwittingly took LSD as part of a Central Intelligence Agency test, then jumped 10 floors to his death less than a week later, according to the Rockefeller commission report released yesterday.

The man was given the drug while attending a meeting with CIA personnel working on a test project that involved the administration of mind-bending drugs to unsuspecting Americans and the testing of new listening devices by eavesdropping on citizens who were unaware they were being overheard.

"This individual was not made aware he had been given LSD until about 20 minutes after it had been administered," the commission said. "He developed serious side effects and was sent to New York with a CIA escort for psychiatric treatment. Several days later, he jumped from a tenth-floor window of his room and died as a result."

The CIA's general counsel ruled that the death resulted from "circumstances arising out of an experiment undertaken in the course of his official duties for the United States government." His family, thus, was eligible for death benefits. And two CIA employees were "reprimanded" by the director.

The Rockefeller commission report on domestic CIA activities said it did not know how many Americans were given "behavior-influencing" drugs by the CIA, declaring that "all persons directly involved in the early phases of the program were either out of the country and not available for interview or were deceased."

The practice of giving drugs to unsuspecting people lasted from 1953 to 1963, when it was discovered by the CIA's inspector general and stopped, the commission said.

Drugs also were tested on volunteers and were part of a "much larger" program to study ways of controlling human behavior. Other studies "explored the effects of radiation, electric shock, phychology, psychiatry, sociology and harassment substances."

The commission report said that all the drug program "records were ordered destroyed in 1973, including a total of 152 separate files."

The commission did not say who ordered the files destroyed or why such an order was given. A commission spokesman said that all documented evidence for the drug tests was turned over to the White House, where it will remain indefinitely.

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LSD Given As Part of Project

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How widespread the practice was of testing new listening devices on unsuspecting people also will remain a mystery. The commission said only that "in the process of this testing, private communications, presumably between United States citizens, have sometimes been overheard."

The commission said that some conversations were recorded, then destroyed when the listening devices were fully tested. It said there was never any evidence that the tests or recordings were used against the people whose conversations were listened to or recorded.

Also mentioned by the commission was the CIA practice of forging documents, such as Social Security cards, bank cards, library cards and club cards.

Only the Social Security Administration was told of this practice, which was recently scaled down to almost eliminate the manufacture of false credit cards, drivers licenses and birth certificates.

The commission found all three practices unsavory, but reserved its harshest language for the drug tests:

"It was clearly illegal to test potentially dangerous drugs on unsuspecting United States citizens."

The only drug mentioned is LSD, which the CIA began to use on test subjects as long as 25 years ago. The commission said the CIA began its drug tests because of reports that the Soviet Union was using drugs to elicit confessions by political criminals, and expanded them when North Korea began brainwashing U.S. prisoners.

Four tests were begun on unsuspecting persons in 1953, then expanded two years later under what the commission called "an informal arrangement" with the federal Bureau of Drug Abuse Control. Presumably, the commission means the Treasury Department's Bureau of Narcotics since the Bureau of Drug Abuse Control was not established until -965.